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<p>(54) Title: CROSS-LINKED POLYMER COMPOSITION CONTAINING A POLYPROPYLENE-ETHYLENE COPOLYMER AND AN ETHYLENE-α-OLEFIN COPOLYMER</p>			
<p>(57) Abstract</p> <p>The invention relates to a cross-linked polymer composition containing 40-90 wt.% propylene-ethylene copolymer with 8-20 wt.% ethylene and 10-60 wt.% ethylene-α-olefin copolymer with 75-90 wt.% ethylene and a density of 920-890 kg/m³, having a notched Izod impact strength $\geq 10\text{kJ/m}^2$ at -20 °C and a flexural modulus higher than 500 MPa. The cross-linked polymer composition is prepared by melting and kneading propylene-ethylene copolymer and ethylene-α-olefin copolymer in the presence of a radical forming agent, a cross-linking agent and, eventually a peroxide inhibitor.</p>			

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CROSS-LINKED POLYMER COMPOSITION CONTAINING
A POLYPROPYLENE-ETHYLENE COPOLYMER AND
5 AN ETHYLENE- α -OLEFIN COPOLYMER

10 The invention relates to a cross-linked polymer composition containing 40-90 wt.% propylene-ethylene copolymer and 10-60 wt.% ethylene- α -olefin copolymer.

A polymer composition of this type is known from DE-A-32,30,516.

15 Herein a cross-linked polymer composition is described containing propylene-ethylene copolymer and ethylene- α -olefin copolymer having a high impact resistance at low temperature and also has good flow properties.

A drawback of the polymer composition described above is that the stiffness of these products with a high impact resistance is too low.

20 The aim of the invention is to obtain a polymer composition that does not present the above drawback.

25 The invention is characterized in that the propylene-ethylene copolymer contains 8-20 wt.% ethylene, the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer contains 75-90 wt.% ethylene and has a density of 920-890 kg/m³ and in that the polymer composition has a notched Izod impact strength ≥ 10 kJ/m² at -20°C and a flexural modulus of more than 500 MPa.

30 This ensures that the polymer composition is very suitable for use in moulded parts that have to show good impact strength at low temperatures and also a high stiffness.

35 JP-A-61/85462 describes a cross-linked polymer composition containing 60-85 wt.% of a propylene-ethylene block copolymer and 15-40 wt.% of an ethylene- α -olefin random copolymer. This polymer composition has, as the polymer composition according to DE-A-32,30,516, a high

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impact strength at low temperatures. The cross-linked polymer composition according to JP-A-61/85462 has as a drawback that the stiffness of this product is too low.

5 The stiffness of a polymer composition is reflected by the flexural modulus, determined according to ASTM D790.

The impact strength of a polymer composition is reflected by the notched Izod impact strength, determined according to ASTM D256.

10 With particular preference the polymer composition has a notched Izod impact strength $\geq 10 \text{ kJ/m}^2$ at -30° , determined according to ASTM D256.

15 When the polymer composition according to the invention is used in large moulded parts, such as car bumpers, it is also important that the polymer composition has good flow properties. Preferably the polymer composition has a viscosity of more than 550 Pa.s, determined according to ASTM D3835 at a shear rate of 115 s^{-1} . The cross-linked polymer composition according to 20 the invention that has this viscosity can readily be thermoplastically processed.

25 The cross-linked polymer composition according to the invention contains 40-90 wt.% propylene-ethylene copolymer relative to the total amount of propylene-ethylene copolymer and ethylene- α -olefin copolymer present. 'Propylene-ethylene copolymer' is within the context of this invention understood to mean: copolymers that containing 8-20 wt.% ethylene.

30 The compatibility of the propylene-ethylene copolymer with the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer is bad and the impact strength is low when the ethylene content in the ethylene-propylene copolymer is lower than 8 wt.%.

35 Examples of propylene-ethylene copolymers are: random copolymers of propylene, ethylene and an α -olefin containing 4-10 carbon atoms, block copolymers of propylene, ethylene and an α -olefin containing 4-10 carbon atoms, and reactor mixtures a propylene homopolymer and

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ethylene homopolymer or ethylene copolymer containing ethylene and one or more α -olefins with 3-10 carbon atoms. Preferably the propylene-ethylene copolymer is a propylene-ethylene block copolymer.

5 Polymer compositions with the highest impact strength are obtained when a propylene-ethylene block copolymer is used in the polymer composition according to the invention.

10 The cross-linked polymer composition according to the invention also contains 10-60 wt.% ethylene- α -olefin copolymer relative to the total amount of propylene-ethylene copolymer and ethylene- α -olefin copolymer present. 'Ethylene- α -olefin copolymer' is in the context of this invention understood to mean random 15 copolymers of ethylene with one or more olefinic comonomers containing 3-10 carbon atoms, containing 75-90 wt.% ethylene with a density of 920-890 kg/m³.

20 The density of the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer is too low when the ethylene content in the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer is under 75 wt.%. Then also the stiffness of the crosslinked polymer composition decreases.

25 The stiffness of the cross-linked polymer composition decreases till under 500 MPa when the ethylene content of the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer is under 890 kg/m³.

When the polyethylene has a density of more than 920 kg/m³ the impact resistance of the polymer composition at low temperatures decreases.

30 Preferably 1-butene, 1-hexene and/or 1-octene are used as α -olefin in the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer.

Examples of ethylene- α -olefin copolymers are low-density polyethylene (LDPE), very-low-density polyethylene (VLDPE) and ultra-low-density polyethylene (ULDPE) and linear-low-density polyethylene (LLDPE).

35 The cross-linked polymer composition according to the invention can be prepared by kneading and melting a mixture of the propylene-ethylene copolymer and the

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ethylene- α -olefin copolymer in the required ratio in the presence of a radical-forming agent and a cross-linking agent.

The radical-forming agent can be chosen from 5 among peroxides or azo compounds. Preferably peroxides are used. Examples of peroxides are benzyl peroxide, t-butyl perbenzoate, t-butyl peracetate, t-butyl peroxyisopropylcarbonate, 2,5-dimethyl-2,5-di(benzoylperoxy)hexane, 2,5-dimethyl-2,5-di(benzoylperoxy)hexyn-3, t-butyl diperadipate, t-butyl peroxy-3,5,5-trimethylhexanoate, methylethylketone peroxide, cyclohexanone peroxide, di-t-butyl peroxide, dicumyl peroxide, 2,5-dimethyl-2,5-di(t-butylperoxy)-hexane, 2,5-dimethyl-2,5-di(t-butylperoxy)hexyn-3, 1,3-bis-(t-butylperoxyisopropyl)benzene, t-butylcumyl peroxide, 1,1-bis-(t-butylperoxy)-3,3,5-trimethylcyclohexane, 1,1-bis-(t-butylperoxy)cyclohexane, 2,2-bis-(t-butylperoxy)-butane, p-mentane hydroperoxide, diisopropylbenzene hydroperoxide, cumene hydroperoxide, t-butyl hydroperoxide, p-cumene hydroperoxide, 1,1,3,3-tetramethylbutyl hydroperoxide and 2,5-dimethyl-2,5-di(hydroperoxy)hexane.

The amount of radical-forming agent present during the melting and kneading of the propylene-ethylene copolymer and the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer is usually between 0.01 and 3 wt.%, relative to the amount of propylene-ethylene copolymer plus ethylene- α -olefin copolymer. Preferably the amount of radical-forming agent is 0.05-2 wt.%, relative to the amount of propylene-ethylene copolymer plus ethylene- α -olefin copolymer.

The cross-linking agent can be chosen from the group comprising compounds containing dihydroxy, divinyl, diallyl or triallyl containing compounds, such as 1,2-, 1,3- and 1,4-dihydroxybenzene, divinyl benzene or 35 diallylphthalate.

Preferably 1,4-dihydroxybenzene is used as the cross-linking agent.

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An amount of between 0.001 and 3 wt.% cross-linking agent, relative to the amount of propylene-ethylene copolymer plus ethylene- α -olefin copolymer, is usually present during the melting and kneading of the 5 propylene-ethylene copolymer and the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer. Preferably an amount of between 0.005 and 0.5 wt.% cross-linking agent is present.

Preferably a peroxide inhibitor is also present during the melting, kneading and mixing of the propylene-ethylene copolymer and the ethylene- α -olefin in the 10 presence of a peroxide and a cross-linking agent. The peroxide inhibitor ensures that the cross-linking reaction does not take place immediately when the melting and kneading are started. That way a good degree of mixing of 15 the propylene-ethylene copolymer and the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer can be achieved before the cross-linking of the polymer composition takes place.

Various compounds may be used as the peroxide inhibitor, such as 1,4-dihydroxybenzene, 2,6-di-*t*-butyl-*p*-cresol, *t*-butylcatechol, 4,4'-butylidene-bis-(3-methyl-6-*t*-butylphenol), 2,2'-methylene-bis-(4-methyl-6-*t*-butylphenol), 4,4'-thio-bis(6-*t*-butyl-3-methylphenol), mercaptobenzothiazole, dibenzothiazoledisulphide, 2,2,4-trimethyl-1,2-dihydroquinone polymers, phenyl- β -naphthylamine, N,N'-di- β -naphthyl-*p*-phenylenediamine and 25 N-nitrosodiophenylamine.

The amount of peroxide inhibitor present during the melting and kneading of the polypropylene and the polyethylene is 0-0.5 wt.%, relative to the amount of 30 propylene-ethylene copolymer plus ethylene- α -olefin copolymer.

Preferably both the cross-linking agent and the peroxide inhibitor are 1,4-dihydroxybenzene and between 0.005 and 0.5 wt.% 1,4-dihydroxybenzene, relative to the 35 amount of propylene-ethylene copolymer plus ethylene- α -olefin copolymer, is added.

The propylene-ethylene copolymer and ethylene- α -

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olefin copolymer are kneaded and melted together with the radical-forming agent, the cross-linking agent and optionally the peroxide inhibitor in the usual equipment, such as mixers, kneaders and single- or twin-screw
5 extruders. The temperature during the melting and kneading is 165 to 270°C.

The cross-linked polymer composition according to the invention may furthermore contain the usual additives such as fibres, fillers, nucleating agents,
10 plasticizers, flame retardants, flow-promoting agents, lubricants, stabilisers and impact improving agents.

The cross-linked polymer composition according to the invention is suitable for use large injection moulded parts for the automotive industry that are exposed
15 to low temperatures, such as bumpers.

The invention will be further elucidated with reference to examples without the invention being limited thereto.

20 **Examples**

Measuring methods

The impact strength (Izod) was determined according to ASTM D256.

The viscosity (SSV) was determined according to
25 ASTM D3835 using a Göttfert 1500 Viscotester at a shear rate of 115 s⁻¹ and a temperature of 240°C. The diameter of the capillary tube was 1 mm, its length 30 mm and the entry angle was 180°C. The measurement was started after the material had been melted for 6 min.

30 The melt index (MI) was determined according to ASTM D1238, at a temperature of 190°C and a pressure of 21.2 N.

The flexural modulus was determined according to ASTM D790.

35 The density was determined according to ASTM D792.

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The materials used

Propylene-ethylene copolymer (PP):

- 10 A1) a propylene-ethylene block copolymer containing 9% ethylene.
- 5 A2) a propylene-ethylene block copolymer containing 12% ethylene.
- A3) a propylene homopolymer

Ethylene- α -olefin copolymer (PE):

- 10 B1) VLDPE with 84 wt.% ethylene, a density of 911 kg/m³ and an MI of 2.2 g/10 min.
- B2) VLDPE with 89 wt.% ethylene a density of 919 kg/m³ and an MI of 2.2 g/10 min.
- 15 B3) HDPE with 99.5 wt.% ethylene, a density of 952 kg/m² and a MI of 10 g/10 min.
- B4) ethylene-propylene-diene rubber with 65 wt.% ethylene and a density of 860 kg/m²
- B5) ethylene-propylene rubber with 71 wt.% ethylene, a density of 880 kg/m² and a MI of 0.4 g/10 min.

20

Radical-forming agent (R): Luperco 802PP40

Cross-linking agent (C): 1,4-dihydroxybenzene

Peroxide inhibitor (P): 1,4-dihydroxybenzene

25 Examples I-X and Comparative Experiments A-D

The polymer compositions were prepared by melting and kneading the various components in a Haake twin-screw extruder at a temperature of 175°C and a throughput of 20 g/min.

30

TABLE 1

Example	PP wt. %	PE wt. %	R wt. %	C+P wt. %	Izod		Izod (-40°C) kJ/m ²	Izod (-30°C) kJ/m ²	SSV	Pa.s	Flexural Modulus MPa
					(-20°C) kJ/m ²	(-30°C) kJ/m ²					
I	A1/60	B2/40	1	0.1	12	7	3	548	680		
II	A1/60	B2/40	1	0.2	13	8	5	798	780		
III	A1/60	B2/40	1	0.05	10	-	-	483	665		
IV	A1/60	B1/40	2	0.1	11	-	-	500	530		
V	A1/60	B1/40	1	0.1	NF	7	5	628	615		
VI	A1/60	B1/40	1	0.2	NF	10	5	658	670		
VII	A1/60	B1/40	1	0.4	NF	16	5	1079	750		
VIII	A2/60	B2/40	0.5	0.1	16	12	6	1079	785		
IX	A2/60	B2/40	1	0.1	NF	18	5	867	640		
X	A2/60	B1/40	1	0.1	NF	NF	7	841	585		

NF = no fracture

TABLE 2
Comparative experiments A-H

Experiment	PP wt. %	PE wt. %	R wt. %	C+P wt. %	Izod		Izod (-40°C) kJ/m ²	Izod (-30°C) kJ/m ²	SSV Pa.s	Flexural Modulus MPa
					(-20°C) kJ/m ²	(-30°C) kJ/m ²				
A	A2/100	-	1	0.1	7	-	-	-	412	1050
B	-	B1/100	1	0.1	NF	NF	NF	NF	2948	1115
C	A1/60	B2/40	-	0.1	8	-	-	-	460	870
D	A2/60	B1/40	1	-	9	-	-	-	587	515
E	A3/60	B1/40	1	0.1	-	-	-	-	ND	650
F	A2/60	B3/40	1	0.1	5.5	-	-	-	ND	1040
G	A2/6-	B4/40	1	0.1	NF	NF	8.9	ND	ND	360
H	A2/60	B5/40	1	0.1	NF	NF	NF	ND	ND	320

NF = no fracture

ND = not determined

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C L A I M S

1. Cross-linked polymer composition containing 40-90 wt.% propylene-ethylene copolymer and 10-60 wt.% ethylene- α -olefin copolymer, characterised in that the propylene-ethylene copolymer contains 8-20 wt.% ethylene, the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer contains 75-90 wt.% ethylene and has a density of 920-890 kg/m³ and in that the polymer composition has a notched Izod impact strength \geq 10 kJ/m² at -20°C and a flexural modulus of more than 500 MPa.
2. Cross-linked polymer composition according to Claim 1, characterized in that the polymer composition has a notched Izod impact strength \geq 10 kJ/m² at -30°C.
3. Cross-linked polymer composition according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, characterized in that the polymer composition has a viscosity of more than 550 Pa.s.
4. Cross-linked polymer composition according to any one of Claims 1-3, characterized in that the propylene-ethylene copolymer is a propylene-ethylene block copolymer.
5. Cross-linked polymer composition according to any one of claims 1-4, characterized in that the α -olefin in the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer is 1-butene, 1-hexene and/or 1-octene.
6. Method for preparing the cross-linked polymer composition according to any one of Claims 1-5 by kneading and melting the propylene-ethylene copolymer and the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer in the presence of 0.05-1 wt.% peroxide and 0.005-0.5 a cross-linking agent.
7. Method according to Claim 6, characterized in that a peroxide inhibitor is also present.
8. Method according to Claim 7, characterized in that the peroxide inhibitor is 1,4-dihydroxybenzene.
9. Method according to any one of claim 6-8, characterized in that the cross-linking agent is 1,4-

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dihydroxybenzene.

10. Moulded part containing the cross-linked polymer composition according to any one of Claims 1-7.
11. Car bumper containing the cross-linked polymer composition according to any one of Claims 1-7.

5

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat.	Application No
PCT/NL 95/00441	

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 6 C08L23/10 C08L23/04 C08K5/14

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 IPC 6 C08L C08K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	DE,A,32 30 516 (MITSUBISHI PETROCHEMICAL) 24 March 1983 see page 7, line 3 - page 9, line 22; claim 1 see page 14, line 34 - page 16, line 34 ---	1-11
X	DATABASE WPI Section Ch, Week 8505 Derwent Publications Ltd., London, GB; Class A17, AN 85-028507 XP002001086 & JP,A,59 223 740 (MITSUI PETROCHEMICAL) see abstract --- -/-	1-3,6, 10,11

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Internal Application No	PCT/NL 95/00441
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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

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